

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed on December 22, 2004. Claims 1 and 12 have been amended and claims 8, 14-18, and 35 have been cancelled. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of original claim 8, which the Examiner indicates includes allowable subject matter. Claim 12, which the Examiner indicates includes allowable subject matter, has been rewritten in independent form incorporating the limitations of original claim 1. Accordingly, no new subject matter has been added. Applicants submit that in view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Claim Objections

Claims 8, 12, and 13 were objected to as being dependent on rejected base claims. The Examiner indicates that claims 8, 12, and 13 would be allowable if rewritten to include all the limitations of the base claims and intervening claims.

The subject matter of claim 8 has been incorporated into claim 1. Claim 8 has been cancelled as being identical in scope as currently amended claim 1. Applicants submit that claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

Claim 12 has been rewritten in independent form. Applicants submit that claim 12 is in condition for allowance.

Claim 13 depends from and further limits claim 12, which has been rewritten in independent form. Therefore, claim 13 does not depend from any rejected base claims. Applicants submit that claim 13 is in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections

Claims 14, 15, 16, and 17 were rejected as being anticipated by Bamburak (US 2002/0137466). This rejection is traversed.

Nonetheless, to advance the prosecution of this application, claims 14-17 have been cancelled without prejudice thereby rendering the above rejection moot.

Claim 18 was rejected as being obvious over Bamburak. This rejection is traversed.

Nonetheless, to advance the prosecution of this application, claim 18 has been cancelled without prejudice thereby rendering the above rejection moot.

Claims 1-5 and 9 were rejected as being obvious over Tamai (US 5,710,979) in view of Casper (US 5,548,623). This rejection is traversed.

Claim 1 was amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 8, therefore, claim 1 is allowable for at least the same reasons claim 8 is allowable. Claims 2-5 and 9 depend on and further limit claim 1, therefore, they are also allowable for at least the same reasons.

Claims 10 and 11 were rejected as being obvious over Tamai in view of Casper and further in view of Gabrielle (US 5,673,036). This rejection is traversed.

Claims 10 and 11 further limit claim 1 which incorporates the allowable subject matter of claim 8, therefore, they are allowable for at least the same reasons claim 8 is allowable.

Claim 6 was rejected as being obvious over Tamai in view of Casper and further in view of Braun et al. (US 6,512,832). This rejection is traversed.

Claim 6 further limits claim 1 which incorporates the allowable subject matter of claim 8, therefore, claim 6 is allowable for at least the same reasons claim 8 is allowable.

Claim 7 was rejected as being obvious over Tamai in view of Casper and further in view of Gurney et al. (US 2003/0072358). This rejection is traversed.

Claim 7 further limits claim 1 which incorporates the allowable subject matter of claim 8, therefore, claim 7 is allowable for at least the same reasons claim 8 is allowable.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance. Applicants acknowledge that the subject matter of the cancelled claims may be pursued in a continuation application. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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